

## Measuring the Specials Teacher's Impact on Student Achievement 2011-2012

**Goal of the AF Teacher Career Pathway:** In order to fulfill our mission of closing the achievement gap for our scholars, we have created a process that will help teachers continuously improve and reward exceptional performance: the Achievement First Teacher Career Pathway. There is a high bar of excellence for all teachers in the network and now there is an explicit process to measure excellence and to provide appropriate feedback for teachers to help them progress along the pathway towards excellence.

**The Challenge of Assessing Student Achievement for Specials Teachers:** All teachers in the AF network will be evaluated using multiple measures, including a teacher's impact on student achievement. Measuring student achievement growth in specials courses can be difficult to do in the absence of state exams, and when achievement is often evidenced in ways other than what can be captured using standardized tests. That is why for "scholar achievement outcomes," the weighting for specials teachers is 20% as opposed to the 40% in subject areas using standardized tests. However, it's important that the process for measuring achievement in specials subjects is rigorous and properly assesses the progress that scholars make in each discipline.

**Measuring Excellence in Specials Courses – Scholar Achievement:** Three different measures will be used to determine the student outcome portion of the TCP evaluation. The three are listed below with the weighting for each:

- **Skills Assessment – 40%** – Designed to measure individual scholar achievement growth in teacher defined skills measures
- **Group Performance Video – 40%** – Designed to measure group achievement within teacher defined performance criteria
- **Written Knowledge Assessment – 20%** – Designed to measure individual scholar achievement growth in knowledge of the discipline

The teacher has discretion to design each measure as appropriate. The plan for each, including the grading rubrics, methods of evidence collection, skills or knowledge being measured, etc. will be documented on planning templates, and will be presented by the teacher to their school leader and achievement director during the Fall Program Review (page 5).

Soft copies of the templates with instructions on how to complete them, as well as samples of completed assessment templates, are available on the [shared server](#).

In the Spring, evidence from all three measures will be submitted into a portfolio to be evaluated by a review committee during the Spring Portfolio Review (page 6). The three assessment measures are described below.

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**Skills Assessment** (yields a score for each scholar)

- Weight within scholar achievement portion of portfolio: 40%
- Designed to measure individual scholar achievement growth over the length of the course on a set of teacher-defined skills
- The teacher will create and administer two Skills Assessments (diagnostic and end-of-course) for each grade taught
- The same set of skills is to be measured in both the diagnostic and end-of-course assessments (exceptions to this practice can be discussed at the Fall Program Review)
- The teacher should fill out a [Skills Assessment Design Template](#) for each Skills Assessment to be administered, and bring all completed templates to the Fall Program Review
- The following components should be clearly indicated on each template:
  - Skills being assessed
  - Related State and/or National Standards
  - Format and detailed description of assessment
  - Rubrics used to evaluate mastery
- For all courses except Art, videotaping of the skills assessment is required.
- Assessment data are collected for inclusion in the spring portfolio review

**Group Performance Video** (yields a score for the class)

- Weight within scholar achievement portion of portfolio: 40%
- Designed to measure group achievement within teacher defined performance criteria
- A performance may be either formal in the traditional sense (in front of an audience), or informal (in a classroom or other location, without an audience)
- The teacher should Fill out **two** [Group Performance Video Planning Templates](#) **per grade taught**, and bring them to the Fall Program Review.
- The two required recorded performances should be scheduled roughly at the beginning and end of the course, and may contain the same or different Performance Criteria, depending on the nature of each performance.
- The following components should be indicated clearly on each template:
  - Description of performance
  - Performance venue
  - Performance date
  - Desired Performance criteria
- Assessment data are collected for inclusion in the Spring Portfolio Review

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**Written Knowledge Assessment** (yields a score for each scholar)

- Weight within scholar achievement portion of portfolio: 20%
- Designed to measure individual scholar achievement growth in knowledge of the discipline in one or more of the following areas: history, terms and elements identification/definition, technique, cultural context
- The teacher will create and administer both diagnostic and end-of-course Written Knowledge Assessments for each grade taught.
- The teacher should fill out a [Written Knowledge Assessment Design Template](#) for each Written Knowledge Assessment, and bring all completed templates to the Fall Program Review
- The following components should be clearly indicated on each template:
  - Areas of knowledge
  - Related State and/or National Standards
  - Format
  - Subject matter
  - Sample questions
- Assessment data are collected for inclusion in the spring portfolio review.

**Notes:**

- The plan for the frequency, number, and schedule of the assessments outlined here is based on the specials program model that a number of our schools use: year-long courses for all grades. There are several other structural models in use at AF, such as trimester-long or half-year programs, and other variations. These differences in structure may necessitate some modifications to the plan outlined in this document. In these cases, modifications to the frequency, number, and schedule of assessments will be determined and finalized in the Fall Program Review.
- An AF team, including current specials teachers and Network Support team members, developed the Teacher Career Pathway Specials Portfolio Process over the last two years by thinking hard about both scholar excellence and teacher development. The team believes that there are certain behaviors, attitudes, and habits of thought that scholars exhibit in a successful specials program – these are: Focus on Technique, Share Community Values, Use Expression and Creativity, Have Perseverance, and Reflect on Oneself and Others. We call these traits [The Pillars of the Discipline](#). With input from AF Specials teachers, we have identified characteristic *attributes* of the pillars that are specific to each discipline. The pillars and their attributes are very difficult to measure. Given this difficulty, we did not feel comfortable with including them in the TCP assessment at this time. We will pilot the measurement of the pillars this year for potential addition to the assessment process for next year. For now, we will rely primarily on more defined and rigorous measures to assess performance in specials courses. The Pillars of the Discipline are located on the shared server.

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| <b>Implementation Timeline</b> |  |  |   |   |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| <b>Date</b>                    | <b>Teacher Action</b>  | <b>School Leader Action</b>  | <b>Achievement Director Action</b>  | <b>Review Committee Action</b>                      |
| <b>August</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define program goals and vision</li> <li>Develop a year-long, rigorous, backward-planned scope and sequence for each grade based on standards (State, National, or other standards)</li> </ul>  | Confirm program schedule and structure (time allotted, frequency, time of day, etc.)                             |   |   |
| <b>September-October</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop diagnostic skills and written assessments</li> <li>Develop end-of-year skill and written knowledge assessments</li> <li>Review and approve program goals, vision, rubrics and other achievement measures with school leader and achievement director (<b>Fall Program Review</b>)</li> </ul>                                | Review and approve program goals and vision with teacher and achievement director ( <b>Fall Program Review</b> ) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and approve program goals, structure and vision with teacher and school leader (<b>Fall Program Review</b>)</li> <li>Review and approve diagnostic and end-of-year skill and written knowledge assessments</li> </ul> |   |
| <b>October - November</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administer diagnostic skills assessment</li> <li>Administer diagnostic written knowledge assessment</li> <li>Submit diagnostic assessment data to achievement director</li> </ul>   |  | Collect data from diagnostic assessments  |   |
| <b>November</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine end-of-year achievement growth goals for skills and written assessments, and submit to achievement director</li> </ul>  |  | Review and approve end-of-year achievement growth goals for skills and written assessments  |   |
| <b>June</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administer end-of-year skills assessment</li> <li>Administer end-of-year written knowledge assessment</li> <li>Reflect on student achievement growth over the year compared to data from diagnostic assessments (optional: and mid-year assessments)</li> <li>Submit end-of-year assessment data to achievement director</li> </ul> |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect end-of-year data</li> <li>Submit all data to review committee</li> </ul>   | Review portfolio ( <b>Spring Portfolio Review</b> ) |

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### **Fall Program Review: Strength of Program**

The program vision, goals, structure, and context within the school culture are reviewed in September/October at a meeting between the specials teacher, school leader and the achievement director to ensure that the teacher is prepared for a successful year. At the meeting, the rubrics and other achievement measures used to demonstrate scholar achievement gains will be discussed and finalized. The outcome of the Fall Program Review will be a clear understanding between the teacher, school leader, and achievement director of what excellence looks like in the specials program, and how that excellence will be achieved and evidenced.

| Program Design Criteria  | Program Meets Expectations   |
|--|--|
| Program is built around a clear vision of excellence with specific scholar performance goals.                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a clear course-long (year, trimester, etc.) scope and sequence for each grade</li> <li>• Mid-year and end-of-year performance goals are specific, measureable and rigorous.</li> <li>• Goals and vision of excellence are agreed upon with the school leader and achievement director</li> </ul> |
| Program is rigorous and appropriate given the school context and scholars' prior experience, skills and knowledge.           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program is appropriate given the school context (time allotted, regularity of class, school day or after-school and school leader expectations)</li> <li>• Program is the appropriate rigor given scholars' prior experience, skills and knowledge (based on scholar diagnostic)</li> </ul>               |
| Assessments (diagnostic and end of course) are effective tools for formative and summative measurements of scholar learning. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessments are aligned with the program goals and scope and sequence</li> <li>• Assessments are rigorously scored with appropriate grade-level expectations for content mastery</li> <li>• Assessment methodology removes subjectivity as much as possible and uses rubrics where appropriate</li> </ul> |

### **Document Checklist for Fall Program Review**

Teachers should use the checklist below to assemble the documents they will bring to the Fall Program Review:

- ☐ Clear, course-long (year, trimester, etc.) scope and sequence for each grade taught, including skills covered throughout the year
- ☐ [Skills Assessment Design Templates](#) (submit one for each grade taught, along with rubrics used)
- ☐ [Group Performance Video Planning Templates](#) (submit two for each grade taught)
- ☐ [Written Knowledge Assessment Templates](#) (submit one for each grade taught, along with rubrics used)

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| <b>Spring Portfolio Review: Scholar Achievement Outcomes</b>   |   |   |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Category and Weight</b>   | <b>5. Exemplary</b>   | <b>4. Strong</b>  | <b>3. Solid</b>   | <b>2. Emergent</b>  | <b>1: Ineffective</b>  |
| <b>Skills Assessment:</b><br>Teachers will submit their diagnostic and end of course skills assessments to share as evidence of individual scholar achievement growth in teacher defined skills measures, along with all required components as indicated on the Skills Assessment Design Template<br>Weight: <b>40%</b>   | 95% meeting growth goals  | 90% meeting growth goals  | 80% meeting growth goals  | 70% meeting growth goals  | Less than 70% meeting growth goals   |
| <b>Group Performance Video:</b><br>Teachers will submit a minimum of 2 group performance videos per grade taught as evidence of group achievement within teacher defined performance criteria, along with all required components as indicated on the Group Performance Video Planning Template<br>Weight: <b>40%</b>  | Video evidence indicates that all desired performance criteria have been met and demonstrated comprehensively | Video evidence indicates that the majority of the desired performance criteria have been met and demonstrated comprehensively | Video evidence indicates that the majority of the desired performance criteria have been met, with some criteria not demonstrated comprehensively | Video evidence indicates that the minority of the desired performance criteria have been met, with some criteria not demonstrated comprehensively | Video evidence indicates that the minority or none of the desired performance criteria have been met, with none of the criteria demonstrated comprehensively |
| <b>Written Knowledge Assessment:</b><br>Teachers will submit their diagnostic and end-of-year written knowledge assessments to share as evidence of individual scholar achievement growth in knowledge of the discipline (optional: submit mid-year written knowledge assessment), along with all required components as indicated on the Written Knowledge Assessment Design Template<br>Weight: <b>20%</b> | 95% meeting growth goals  | 90% meeting growth goals  | 80% meeting growth goals  | 70% meeting growth goals  | Less than 70% meeting growth goals   |

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